CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1593
6 September 1999

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 6 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE FISSILE MATERIAL CUT-OFF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

Please find enclosed the declaration of the European Union on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty negotiations. The associated countries to the EU align themselves with this declaration.

On behalf of the EU member States I would like to ask that this declaration be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed) Markku Reimaa
Ambassador

GE.99-65792

Declaration of the European Union on the FMCT

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta align themselves with this declaration.

As the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament is drawing to its conclusion, the European Union and the associated countries assure their support to the efforts of the President of the Conference on Disarmament to come to an agreement to start substantive work as soon as possible. At the same time they appreciate the work done by the previous Presidents in this difficult issue.

The Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty has been the long-standing goal of the international community. In 1993, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously recommended negotiations on a FMCT. In the decision on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" the States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty unanimously recognised the importance of such negotiations in the full realization and effective implementation of article VI of the NPT. In 1995, and again in 1998, the Conference on Disarmament decided to establish an ad hoc committee. The General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously welcomed this decision in 1998 and encouraged the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish this ad hoc committee at the beginning of the 1999 session.

The European Union believes that a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty constitutes, after the CTBT, a major step towards the achievement of both the nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives envisaged in the NPT document on principles and objectives.

The European Union is convinced that a FMCT, by irreversibly limiting the fissile material stockpiles available for use in nuclear weapons and by establishing an effective verification system, will strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and will constitute a significant step towards the realization and effective implementation of article VI of the NPT.

In view of the agreement in the CD in August 1998 to establish an ad hoc committee on FMCT, it is incumbent on the CD to take an early decision to resume these negotiations.

The Member States of the European Union and the associated countries have a very clear position and objective: they will continue to work strenuously for the FMCT, they are ready to participate in negotiations on such a treaty actively and constructively and they will promote an early and successful outcome of negotiations.

The EU is of the view that the negotiations should start immediately and efforts should be pursued vigorously to reach an agreement on the remaining elements of a substantive programme of work.